

21  
9-13-05

## City's Response to Hurricane Katrina

### Public Safety Response:

- The Mayor, City Manager, and the Emergency Management Coordinator have participated in numerous conference calls with regional elected leaders, City and County Managers and first responders to coordinate Katrina responses.
- City staff is reviewing our emergency plans in light of Katrina and is monitoring Ophelia.
- The Northern Virginia Region has put together a 46-person team including five personnel from the Alexandria Fire, TES, Recreation and Parks, and ITS departments, ready to staff the New Orleans Emergency Operations Center. This mission is awaiting assignment.
- The Northern Virginia Region has put together a 10-person team including one person from the Alexandria Police ready to staff the New Orleans Emergency Operations Center. This mission is scheduled to depart at 7 p.m. tonight.
- Ninety-seven employees from the Police Department have volunteered for deployment and the Police Department has submitted a plan to deploy a 15-person team to respond to the gulf region. This mission is awaiting assignment
- The Health Department has submitted a list of people available for the Gulf region or other deployment.
- Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities has formulated a list of tree crews to assist in clearing debris in the Gulf region. They have also submitted a list of shelter managers who are available.
- Ninety Fire Department employees have volunteered for deployment. The Fire Department is submitting a plan to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to send a team of five Code Inspectors to go to Mississippi to assist in Damage Assessment. This mission is awaiting assignment
- The Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs have submitted a plan to VDEM to send a team of 50 firefighters to the Gulf region. We stand ready to help fulfill the resource and staffing needs that may be requested to assist in recovery efforts.
- The Health Department is supporting volunteers going to the Gulf region and is ready to provide needed inoculations before deployment

### Recovery Activities:

- The Housing Office is coordinating with non-profit agencies and faith based organizations to provide lists of available housing opportunities to assist in the relief effort

- The Mayor has sent 71 letters to churches and synagogues in Alexandria asking them to talk to their congregations about helping in the relief effort.
- The Mayor has taped a public service announcement at Comcast that will urge Alexandrians to support the relief efforts. The PSA will be shown on local cable channels beginning Thursday September 15.
- City Department of Human Services has assisted 17 families and has developed a list of employees who have volunteered to deploy if requested.
- City to co-sponsor race on Saturday September 17 to raise money to help victims of Hurricane Katrina The Gulf Coast Relief 5k Run Walk, which will benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina will be held on Saturday, September 17 at 9 am at Oronoco Bay Park in Alexandria. All proceeds will be donated to the American Red Cross Hurricane 2005 Relief Fund. Registration is \$25.00 and is accepted via mail, fax, in person or online. To register, send or obtain a registration form at either Pacers Running store, located at 1301 King Street, Alexandria, or 3100 Clarendon Boulevard, Arlington.
- Online registration can be completed at the Gulf Coast Relief 5k Run Walk website, [www.gulfcoastrelief5k.com](http://www.gulfcoastrelief5k.com). Packet pickup will be available at the Alexandria Pacers location Thursday, September 15 and Friday, September 16. Race day registration and packet pickup will be available at Oronoco Bay Park. The run walk will begin at the corner of North Union and Pendleton Streets and travel along the tree-lined streets of Old Town. Water stops, food, t-shirts, and prizes will be provided. Co-sponsors of the race include Alexandria residents James Carville and Mary Matalin, Pacers Running Store, Mizuno USA, Roll Call Newspaper, Great Harvest Bread Company of America and the City of Alexandria.
- City staff is working with Red Cross – primary response agency for social service needs. Alexandria Red Cross has processed 44 families over 100 people and is assisting in management of the DC Armory Shelter. They have deployed 45 Alexandrians to the Gulf region with more set to go.
- We are encouraging residents to donate cash, volunteer through an experienced relief organization, and to call Virginia's hotline for in-kind service donations.
- The Community Services Board has created a tips brochure for those volunteering to help in the Gulf region.
- City staff is prepared to provide various support services if needed to City staff upon their return from deployment.
- The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse has offered 15 beds to house mentally ill, mentally retarded or substance abuse consumers.

- Residency and fee requirements have been waived for hurricane victims who may come to Alexandria to ensure there are no barriers to serving them.
- Mental Health has created a brochure on helping children deal with trauma/stress and will be distributing them to the schools in Alexandria.
- The Community Services Board has updated its website to include tips on how to manage stress reactions. We are working to add links to the City website.
- The Carpenter Shelter is housing one evacuee.

## In the aftermath of a natural disaster - we are normal people reacting to abnormal circumstances.

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Feeling uptight
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Diarrhea
- Lack of energy
- Loss of hope
- Poor concentration
- Overeating
- Skipping meals
- Clumsiness
- Anger
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Forgetfulness
- Indigestion
- Stomach knots
- Constant errors
- Difficulty making decisions
- Sadness
- Lack of interest
- Difficulty sleeping
- Oversleeping or sleepiness
- New or increased use of tobacco products, alcohol or other drugs

## Ways to Increase Resilience

### As best you can, given the circumstances:

- Don't demand too much of yourself.
- Ask for help.
- Accept that you can't control everything and be flexible.
- Divide big tasks into smaller ones.
- Eat healthy and avoid sugar.
- Get enough rest.
- Exercise some each day.
- Make time to unwind before bed.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
- Use mistakes to learn.
- Be realistic about what you can do.
- Talk about things with a friend or colleague so that frustrations don't build up.
- Let yourself cry.
- Stay in touch with family and friends as best you can.
- Practice deep breathing. Take a slow deep breath through your nose to the count of five. Hold your breath for another 5-count then exhale through your mouth for a 5-count.
- Take breaks.
- Try not to judge yourself and others.

## Anti-stress Stretches

**Finger Fan:** Extend your arms straight out in front of you with palms up. Spread your fingers as far apart as possible and hold for 5 seconds.



**Upper-back Stretch:** Sit up straight with your fingers interlaced behind your head. Keep your shoulders down, lift your chest and bring your elbows back as far as you can. Hold for 10 seconds.



**Ear to Shoulder:** Lower your right ear to your right shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on other side.



**Overhead Reach:** Raise your arms over your head and interlace your fingers with your palms facing up. Keep your shoulders down and stretch upwards. Hold for 20 seconds.



**Knee Pull:** While seated, pull one knee up to your chest as high as possible. Hold with both hands for 10 seconds then repeat the other knee.



**Waist Bend:** Reach arms overhead with finger interlaced. Keep shoulders down and bend to one side at the waist. Hold for 20 seconds then repeat on the other side.



## IT HELPS TO TALK

If you are feeling worn out, frustrated, angry, sad or just want to touch base with someone, we're here. If communication allows, give us a call 24/7:

- Alexandria  
Community Services  
Board, Emergency  
Services: 703-838-6400
- City of Alexandria  
Employee Assistance  
Program:  
800-346-0110

*Thanks for  
volunteering.*

*Be safe.*

*We're thinking of  
you & will see you  
when you get back.*



# Katrina Volunteers: Tips for City Staff



(703) 838-6400  
24 hours a day  
TDD: (703) 838-5054  
[www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa](http://www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa)